

THE CORRECT NAME OF THE NORTH AMERICAN GREAT LEOPARD MOTH

MARTIN R. HONEY¹ AND MARK YOUNG²

¹ *Department of Entomology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.*

² *Culterty Field Station, University of Aberdeen, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire AB41 0AA.*

A CORRECTION is necessary to the scientific name given by Young (1995) to the Great Leopard Moth found in 1994 in Aberdeen, which was apparently imported from Houston, Texas, USA. The name of this species has been the subject of some confusion in the past, even in its native North America, and it has been incorrectly cited in the British literature. According to Watson and Goodger (1986: 30), the correct scientific name for this species is *Hypercompe scribonia* (Stoll, [1790]) (Lepidoptera: Arctiidae) which occurs naturally in central and eastern North America.

In Heath and Emmet (1979: 110), de Worms used the name *Ecpantheria deflorata* (Fab.) for a specimen of the Great Leopard Moth that was imported with American oak to Edinburgh but gave the type locality of the species as "India". This confusion is due to an incorrect citation: "*Bombyx deflorata* Fabricius, 1794, *Ent. Syst.* 3(2): 127". This refers to a different species, *Hyblaea deflorata* Fabricius, which was described from India and is now placed in the genus *Hypocala* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae). The correct reference for *Bombyx deflorata* is Fabricius, 1775, *Syst. Ent.*: 582.

However, the issue is further complicated as *B. deflorata* was described from South America and, according to Watson and Goodger (1986: 30), the correct name for the North American species should be *scribonia* Stoll (formerly regarded as a junior synonym of *deflorata*). This species is currently assigned to the genus *Hypercompe* Hübner, [1819], a senior synonym of *Ecpantheria* Hübner, [1820].

The citation in Heath and Emmet (1979) should read:

"HYPERCOMPE Hübner
Hypercombe Hübner, [1819], *Samml. exot. Schmett.* 1: pl. [191].
Ecpantheria Hübner, [1820], *Verz. bekannt. Schmett.*: 183.

HYPERCOMPE SCRIBONIA (Stoll)
Phalaena (Noctua) scribonia Stoll, [1790], *Uit. Kapell. (Aanhangsel)*: 177,
184, pl. 41, fig. 3.
Bombyx deflorata sensu auct.
Type locality: New York."

The entry in Bradley and Fletcher (1986: 56), no. 2096a should also be amended accordingly.

As no previous illustration of this species has been given in the British literature we figure both specimens referred to by Young (1995) (Figs. 1 & 2).

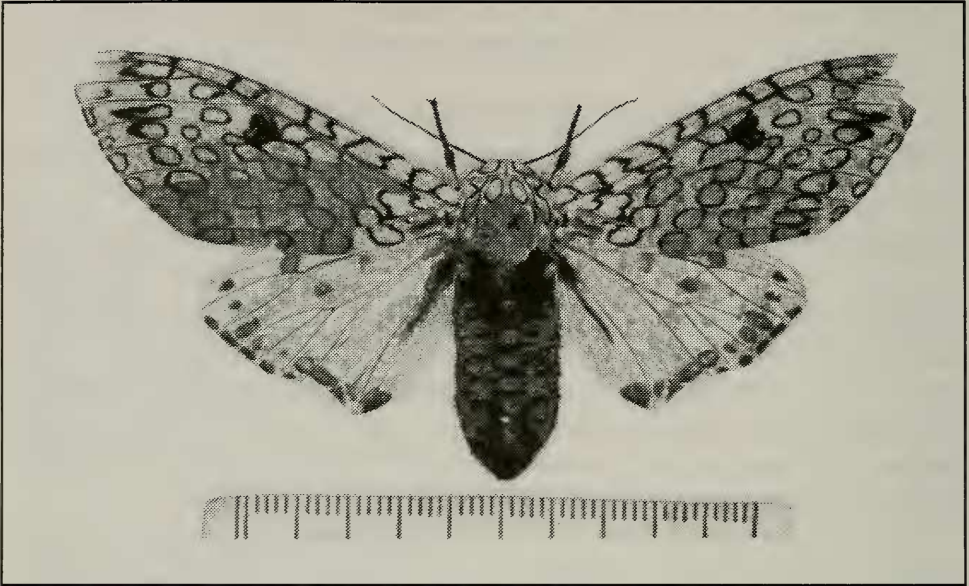


Fig. 1. *Hypercompe scribonia* (Stoll), female, Aberdeen, 9.vi.1994.

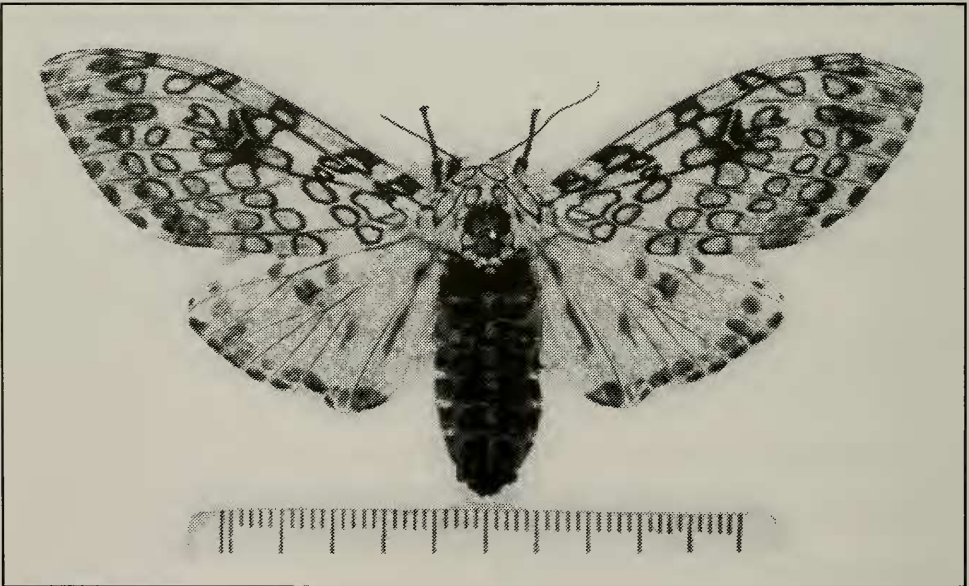


Fig. 2. *H. scribonia* (Stoll), female, 18.vii.1974.

Scale bar = millimetres

PLATE A

Acknowledgements

We thank Dr Mark Shaw, National Museums of Scotland, for the loan of the two specimens for illustration and Mr P. Hurst, the Photographic Unit, The Natural History Museum, for the black and white photographs.

References

- Bradley, J.D. and Fletcher, D.S., 1986. *An indexed list of British Butterflies and Moths*. Kedleston Press, Orpington.
- Heath, J. and Emmet, A.M. (eds), 1979. *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*. Vol. 9. Curwen Books, London.
- Watson, A. and Goodger, D.T., 1986. Catalogue of the Neotropical tiger-moths. *Occ. Pap. syst. Ent.* **1**: 1-71.
- Young, M.R., 1995. An American moth in Aberdeen. *Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation*, **107**: 198-199.
-
-

OBITUARY**Denis Frank Owen, MA, PhD, DSc, FLS**

Denis Owen died of cancer on 3 October 1996. He was an enthusiastic field naturalist and a prolific writer, publishing some 250 scientific papers, ten books and numerous articles in many different publications. Besides his intellectual and academic achievements he maintained an insatiable zest for field natural history, operating the m.v. traps in his rural Oxfordshire garden to within three days of his death.

While still at school he joined the London Natural History Society and quickly impressed the senior members of the Society. He took a prominent part in the Society's ecological survey of the bombed sites of central London, publishing his first entomological paper *The macrolepidoptera of the Moorgate, London, bombed sites* (*Entomologist* **82**: 59-62) in 1949. Later that year he was called-up for National Service with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He was fortunate in some ways that he spent most of his two years' service in isolated camps adjacent to the Solway Firth, thus giving him splendid opportunities to familiarise himself with the rich wildlife to be found there, especially the northern species of Lepidoptera. It was here that he captured and described in 1952 a new aberration, *inocellata* Owen, of *Erebia aethiops* (Esper) (*Entomologist* **85**: 92).

Towards the end of his army service he was invited by Dr David Lack, Director of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Oxford University, to work with him on the ecology of titmice, grey herons, rooks and swifts, on which he published several papers in his own right. He maintained unabated, however, his interest in entomology, studying insect migration with the writer in south-west France in 1953, for example, and continuing to publish prolifically on the subject.

In 1956 he was given a belated opportunity to read for an Honours Degree in zoology at Oxford and after graduating in 1958 he went to the USA to take up a lectureship at the University of Michigan, gaining his doctorate there in 1961. He became well-known in entomological and ornithological circles in the United States as papers continued to flow steadily from his pen, including four on industrial melanism in North American moths. His first